

China's One-Child Policy: Twenty-Five Years Later

Testimony of Steven W. Mosher

In 1979-80, Steven Mosher became the first Western social scientist allowed to carry out fieldwork in rural China. He arrived at the beginning of the one-child policy, and documented the attendant horrors. Twenty-six years later, the policy is still firmly in place, with the Chinese government determined to continue the policy until 2050. Meanwhile, the population-control establishment has busied itself exporting elements of this cruel policy to other countries.

Li Aihai, happily married and the mother of a 2½-year-old girl, had a problem. She was four months pregnant with her second child. Sihui county family-planning officials had come to her home and told her what she already knew: She had gotten pregnant too soon. She hadn't waited until her daughter was four years old, as Chinese law required of rural couples. The officials assured her that, because her first child had been a girl, she would eventually be allowed a second child. But they were equally insistent that she would have to abort this one. It was January 2000.^[1]

She pleaded that she had not intended to get pregnant. She was still wearing the IUD that they had implanted in her after the birth of her first child, as the law required. They were unsympathetic. Report to the family-planning clinic tomorrow morning, they told her. We'll be expecting you.

Aihai had other plans. Leaving her little daughter in the care of her husband, she quietly packed her things and went to stay with relatives in a neighboring county. She would hide until she brought her baby safely into the world. Childbirth-on-the-run, it was called.

When the county family-planning officials discovered that Aihai had disappeared, they began arresting her relatives. While her father-in-law managed to escape with her daughter, her mother-in-law and brother-in-law were arrested. Her own mother and father, brother and sister, and three other relatives were also imprisoned over the next few weeks. In all, nine members of her extended family were arrested, hostages to the abortion that was being demanded of her.

But Aihai, knowing that her family supported her pregnancy, stayed in hiding. And her relatives, each refusing to tell the officials where she had gone to ground, stayed in jail.

Three months later the family-planning officials struck again. The date they chose, April 5, was an important one on the Chinese traditional calendar. It was the festival of Qingming, or "bright and clear," a day on which rural Chinese men, by ancient custom, "sweep the graves" of their ancestors. Starting with the grave of their own deceased parents, they visit in turn the graves of grandparents, great-grandparents, and ancestors even further removed. At each stop they first clean off the headstones and weed the plot, then set out a feast for the deceased, complete with bowls of rice, cups of rice liquor, and sticks of incense.

Why did the family-planning officials pick this day? Was it a further insult to the Li family, several of whom were languishing in their jail? Or was the day chosen for a very practical reason—that with most of the men and boys away in the hills fêting their ancestors, the village would be half-deserted, and the officials could carry out their plan without opposition?

The officials descended on the village with a wrecking crew armed with crowbars and jackhammers. These fell upon Aihai's home like a horde of angry locusts. They shattered her living-room and bedroom furniture. They ripped window frames out of walls and doors off of hinges. Then the jackhammers began to pound, shattering the brick walls, and knocking great holes in the cement roof and floors. By the time they had completed their work of destruction, you could stand on the first floor of Aihai's home and look up through two stories and the roof to the blue sky. The wrecking crew then moved on to her parents' house, and then to her in-laws'. At day's end, three homes lay in ruins. The family-planning officials confiscated the family's livestock and poultry, and then disappeared.

Aihai remained in hiding, out of reach of the officials, for two more months. It wasn't until her child was actually born, she knew, that he would be safe. (Abortions in China are performed up to the very point of parturition, and it is not uncommon for babies to be killed by lethal injection even as they descend in the birth canal.) Only after she had given birth—to a beautiful baby boy—did she make plans to return home.

Aihai came back to find her family in prison, her home destroyed, and family-planning officials furious that she had thwarted their will. Underlying their anger was hard calculation: Every "illegal" child born in their county was a black mark on their performance, depressing annual bonuses and threatening future promotions. But family-planning officials, like most Chinese officials, have access to other sources of income. If you want your relatives released, they now told Aihai, you must pay a fine of 17,000 Renminbi (about \$2,000). Now this is a huge sum by Chinese standards, the equivalent of two or three years' income. It was many days before she was able to beg and borrow enough from family and friends to satisfy the officials' demands, and win her family's release.

No sooner had she paid one fine than she was told she owed another, if she wanted to regularize her son's status. He was currently a "black child," family-planning officials explained to her. Because he was conceived outside of the family-planning law, he did not exist in the eyes of the state. As a nonperson, he would be turned away from the government clinic if he fell ill, barred from attending a government school of any kind, and not considered for any kind of government employment later in life. He would not even be allowed to marry or start a family of his own. The government had decreed that "black children" would not be allowed to reproduce; one generation of illegals was enough. There was an out, however: If she paid another fine of 17,000 RMB, her son would be issued a national identity number, and would be treated like everyone else—almost. She would still be required to pay double fees for his school supplies.

She was not surprised when, later, she was ordered to report for sterilization. The population-control regulations were unyielding in this regard: Two children and your tubes are tied. This time she made no effort to resist. Having a second child had bankrupted her family; having a third was out of the question. Her newborn son would have no younger siblings.

Even so, Aihai considers herself far more fortunate than Ah Fang, the wife of a neighboring villager. Married at 19 to an older man in a time-honored village ceremony in front of dozens of relatives and friends, Ah Fang is considered by everyone she knows to be his wife. Everyone, that is, but the local Communist authorities, whose unbending regulations prohibit women from marrying until they reach age 23.

When Ah Fang became pregnant there was no chance that she would be allowed to carry her child to term, even though it would have been her first. The one-child policy does not apply to couples who are, in the view of the Chinese state, merely cohabiting. For them--and for single mothers of all ages--there is a *zero*-child policy. Ah Fang was ordered to present herself at the local clinic for an abortion. She went in as instructed on September 27, 2001. She has been careful not to criticize the authorities, but her friends have been less reticent. "She wanted to keep her baby," they complain openly, "but the law forbade it."^[2]

A QUARTER CENTURY OF COERCION

Such personal tragedies, far from being rare, could easily be multiplied almost beyond belief. I met many Li Aihais and Ah Fangs (the names are, of course, pseudonyms) while living in a village in Guangdong province from 1979 to 1980, and have met many in the years since. But it would be impossible to know them all. For the history of China's 25-year experiment in "controlling reproduction under a state plan" is littered with literally tens of millions of such victims of forced abortion and forced sterilization.^[3]

At the beginning of 1980, the Guangdong provincial government secretly ordered a 1 percent cap on population growth for the year. Local officials complied the only way they could—by launching what they called a "high tide" to terminate as many pregnancies as possible. The rule governing this high tide was simple: No woman was to be allowed to bear a second child within four years of her first, and third children were strictly forbidden. Furthermore, all women who had borne three or more children by November 1, 1979, were to be sterilized.

Over the next few weeks I became an eyewitness to every aspect of this draconian campaign. I went with young mothers to family-planning "study sessions" where they were browbeaten by senior Party officials for getting pregnant. I followed them as they were unwillingly taken under escort to the commune clinic. I watched—with the permission of local officials who were eager to demonstrate their prowess in birth control to a visiting foreigner—as they were aborted and sterilized against their will. I will never forget the pain and suffering etched on the faces of these women as their unborn children,

some only days from birth, were brutally killed with poison shots and then dismembered with surgical knives.

In the 1980s, the demands of China's family planners escalated.^[4] The one-child policy, first suggested by Deng Xiaoping in a hard-line 1979 speech, was in place nationwide by 1981. The "technical policy on family planning" followed two years later. Still in force today, the "technical policy" requires IUDs for women of childbearing age with one child, sterilization for couples with two children (usually performed on the woman), and abortions for women pregnant without authorization. By the mid-1980s, according to Chinese government statistics, birth-control surgeries—abortions, sterilizations, and IUD insertions—were averaging more than 30 million a year. Many, if not most, of these procedures were performed on women who submitted only under duress.

The principal modification of the one-child policy occurred in the mid to late 1980s when, in response to rising rates of female infanticide, the government relaxed the policy in the countryside for couples whose first child was a girl. In some parts of China this has devolved into a de facto two-child policy. Some rural officials find the selective enforcement of a mixed policy—one child for couples whose first child was a boy, two children for couples whose first child was a girl—impossible to manage. Others, including the officials who run Sihui county in Guangdong province, where Li Aihai lives, are doing quite well at giving everyone two chances at a son, but no chance for two sons.

The program continues to be carried out, against the popular will, by means of a variety of coercive measures. In presenting the program to foreigners, who can be squeamish about such things, officials are careful to emphasize "voluntarism." In speaking to their own cadres, however, the only form of coercion ever condemned is the actual use of physical force—e.g., tying down pregnant women for abortions. But while force is frowned upon, it is never punished. Home-wrecking, unlawful detention, heavily punitive fines, and like measures continue to be, as they have been from the late 1970s, the whip hand of the program. Women are psychologically and physically pressured to abort unauthorized children, to the point of being dragged to the abortion mill. Networks of paid informants are used to report on unauthorized pregnancies; entire villages are punished for out-of-plan births. Officials conduct nighttime raids on couples suspected of having unauthorized children, and they keep detailed records on the sexual activity of every woman in their jurisdiction. There are prison cells—with bars—to detain those who resist forced abortion or sterilization. (Forced sterilization is used not only as a means of population control, but sometimes as *punishment* for men and women who disobey the rules.^[5])

The result of this systematic coercion is that millions of IUD insertions, sterilizations, and abortions continue to be performed each year. The national family-planning journal continues to issue thinly disguised injunctions to get the job done at all costs. Officials are exhorted to take "real action" and "effective measures" to achieve "practical results." In short, Deng Xiaoping's no-holds-barred approach still dominates the program. "Use

whatever means you must to reduce the population,” China’s paramount leader ordered Party officials back in 1979. “Just do it.”¹⁶¹ They have been “just doing it” ever since.

The Chinese government maintains that abuses are the exception, not the rule, and constitute local aberrations from national policy. But when the Guangdong provincial government orders 25,000 abortions to be carried out in Huaiji County, as it did in 2001 in response to reports of laxity in the local family-planning program, this can hardly be described as a “local aberration.” The Chinese program remains highly coercive not because of local deviations from central policies but as a direct, inevitable, and intentional consequence of those policies.

And this is no secret. Articles in the Chinese media openly speak of the need for coercion in family planning, and senior officials continue to endorse the policy as currently practiced. Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, for instance, said on October 13, 1999, that “China will continue to *enforce* its *effective* family-planning policy in the new century in order to create a favorable environment for further development” (italics added). And in its *White Paper on Population*, released on December 19, 2000, China avows that it will continue the one-child policy for another 50 years. The *White Paper* actually sets a population target of 1.6 billion by the year 2050.

Chinese officials suggest to the outside world that these targets and quotas will be achieved by “education” and “persuasion,” rather than coercion and compulsion. As an example of the effectiveness of these tactics, the *White Paper* reported that women were postponing childbirth: While in 1970 they gave birth to their first child at 20.8 years of age, by 1998 they were putting off childbearing until they were almost three years older, age 23.6. But this claim is disingenuous: Women are giving birth later not because officials have gently whispered in their ears, but because they are strictly forbidden to marry until age 23, and hustled off for an abortion if they become pregnant out of wedlock. Ah Fang would have given birth at 20, had she not been ordered to terminate her pregnancy. As it is, she will be 23 or older when she has her first (and perhaps her only) child.

SUPPORT FROM THE WEST

Powerful images of China’s teeming multitudes, dating back to the time of Marco Polo, are etched deeply on Western minds. The wandering Venetian found much to admire in Cathay’s ancient civilization, but it was the sheer number of Chinese that left him astounded. Skeptical contemporaries gave him the mocking title “Il Milione” for the frequency with which he used this superlative to describe the populations of China’s cities and provinces, the numbers of her civil functionaries, and the seemingly endless ranks of her men under arms.

But Marco Polo was, in this respect, a perfectly reliable witness. The world had never seen a more populous empire than the 13th-century Yuan Dynasty. It had a population of some 110 million occupying a continent-sized territory with a standing army of a million. It dwarfed contemporaneous Western states, such as the England of Henry III, in every

respect. Moreover, it had been in existence, counting dynastic interregna, for over 1,500 years. China's population was already 60 million at the time of Christ and reached ever-greater peaks during later dynasties--80 million in the 9th-century Tang Dynasty, 110 million at the time of Marco Polo, 200 million in the 16th-century Ming, 425 million in the 19th-century Ching. Throughout these centuries, China's large population was rightly seen as an indispensable element of its national greatness and imperial power.

But there is another, darker Western perception of China's population, dating back to the Mongol hordes of the non-Chinese Genghis Khan, which sees them "as a faceless, impenetrable, overwhelming mass, irresistible once loosed."^[7] And a mass, it might be added, that was thought to be feverishly multiplying. If all of the Chinese people were formed up into a column five abreast, went a cocktail riddle popular in the 1920s, how long would it take the entire column to march past a fixed point? "Forever" was taken to be the correct answer: The column would turn out to be endless, because the Chinese would simply breed faster than they marched. Or so it was wrongly supposed.^[8] The image of China's population as a "yellow peril" was brought vividly to life again in the 1950s, when a sea of Chinese flooded across the Yalu River into Korea, and "human wave" attacks were reported by American troops. The hyperbolic reporting of China's "overpopulation problem" over the past 20 years arises in part from these same dark fears. In the view of the new Malthusians, China is a boiling pressure cooker of people, who at any time could explode beyond her borders in a human flood of illegal immigration--or conquest.

Western population-control advocates, therefore, welcomed China's 1979 policy with a mixture of euphoria and relief: euphoria because the world's most populous nation was at last getting serious about its numbers, and relief because China would now dam up its seas of people before they could inundate the world. The Westerners would roll up their sleeves and pitch in: They would help design and implement a program that would turn China, everyone's brutish infant of overpopulation, into a poster child of family planning. China would become a model for other countries. Depressing the birth rate in China—important in itself—would in this way help to further depress birth rates worldwide. It would move the controllers at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and elsewhere that much closer to their global goal of, in the words of UNFPA Executive Director Nafis Sadik, "achieving the lowest level of population in the very shortest time."^[9]

No thought was given to China's abysmal human-rights record, or expressed the concern that the Chinese government, in dictating how many children a couple might have, was violating parental rights. No one worried that, in enforcing the one-child policy, the government might resort to coercion, as it had done in past political campaigns. Everything--economic development, democracy, and even human rights—would have to await the taming of her numbers.

Acting as if they were afraid that the Beijing regime might change its mind, the controllers hastily began helping to fund the program. The largest grant came from the UNFPA, which would quickly become the major player in China; it ponied up a hefty

\$50 million over the first five years. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) signaled its approval with a grant of \$500,000. The money went to its Chinese affiliate--which, IPPF reported with paternal pride, "organize[s] . . . the family-planning group which will formulate the birth plans."^[10] The World Bank opened up its coffers as well, and by 1996 had loaned more than \$22 billion to China.^[11] This international largesse, as economist Jacqueline Kasun has noted, is funded in part by unsuspecting taxpayers in industrialized nations.^[12]

Having underwritten the China program, population-control advocates were soon acclaiming its achievements, and even expressing approval of many of its methods. The United Nations picked 1983, a year of unusually severe coercion inside China, to present the first United Nations Population Award to the PRC. The decision was criticized in many quarters--the American Nobel Prize-winning economist, Theodore W. Schultz, immediately resigned in protest from the Population Award advisory commission--but the U.N. was undeterred. As a family-planning "high tide" ripped through the Chinese countryside, U.N. officials lauded China "for the most outstanding contribution to the awareness of population questions." That same year, the IPPF welcomed the Chinese Family Planning Association to full membership, declaring the goals of the Chinese program entirely consistent with its own.^[13] Commendations from the World Bank and the Better World Society of Washington, D.C., followed.^[14] One wonders what the approximately 15 million young Chinese women who underwent abortions that year, perhaps 90 percent under coercive circumstances, thought of such accolades.

Talk of exporting the China model had already surfaced. Werner Fornos of the Population Institute, a group closely tied to the UNFPA, declared in 1982 that the Chinese program was one that "the world should copy."^[15] The World Bank, in its *Development Report 1984*, insisted that "voluntary" incentives "need be no more objectionable than any other taxes or subsidies," and went on to describe the Chinese program in laudatory terms.^[16]

THE TRUTH COMES OUT, BUT . . .

As the 1980s progressed, the trickle of reports about coercion in China became a flood. Michele Vink wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* of women who were "handcuffed, tied with ropes or placed in pig's baskets" for their forced trips to the abortion clinics.^[17] Christopher Wren reported in the *New York Times* that thousands of Chinese women were being "rounded up and forced to have abortions." He described women "locked in detention cells or hauled before mass rallies and harangued into consenting to abortions." He told of "vigilantes [who] abducted pregnant women on the streets and hauled them off, sometimes handcuffed or trussed, to abortion clinics," and of "aborted babies which were . . . crying when they were born."^[18] Michael Weiskopf of the *Washington Post* in 1983 published a lengthy series of articles on the one-child policy that made vivid the human cost of the program. Elliott Abrams, then assistant secretary of state for human rights, ensured that the Chinese practice of forced abortions and sterilizations made its way into the State Department's *Country Report on Human Rights Practices*. With the press speaking openly about the "butchering, drowning, and leaving to die of female

infants and the maltreating of women who have given birth to girls,” little reasonable doubt could remain that China’s population program was synonymous with brutality and coercion.^[19]

For my part, I published a best-selling book on rural China called *Broken Earth*, appeared on *60 Minutes* and other television shows, and lectured around the U.S., reporting on the forced abortions and sterilizations that I had witnessed.^[20] Many people shared my outrage; the reaction of others was strangely muted. Some in Congress and the media, I was disappointed to find, were all too ready to excuse these acts in the name of fighting overpopulation. As one of the leaders of the National Organization of Women put it to me, “I am personally opposed to forced abortion and sterilization but, after all, China does have a population problem.” Others, sounding for all the world like the Chinese Communist Party officials I had interviewed, openly argued that, because China was a poor country, its people could not be allowed to have as many children as they wanted. A number even applauded the Chinese model, and wanted to use it as a blueprint for other countries. “Limiting everyone to one child, even in the U.S., is a good idea,” one said to me.

What I had thought an open-and-shut case—who could defend the forced abortion of a woman eight months pregnant?—had turned out to be an open question. A wild-eyed professor at California State University at San Luis Obispo became angry with me for even suggesting the moral considerations. “Don’t you see that the Chinese government *must* control childbearing under a state plan in order for China to develop!” he shouted in front of the 800 faculty and students who had gathered for my lecture. Lurking behind his utilitarian obtuseness was the misguided belief that the Chinese people in their numbers were the chief obstacle to China’s prosperity.

But nothing could match the enthusiasm of the professional population-control movement. Their earlier actions in supporting the program had turned them into collaborators in the abuses that followed. But they really didn’t seem to care: As long as China was “doing something” about its “overpopulation problem,” they were on board. Many, like the head of the Population Council, Bernard Berelson, had long wanted to go “beyond family planning” to massive government intervention to force down fertility.^[21] Sharon Camp, then with the Population Crisis Committee, admitted that “the Chinese in many areas of China are able to put enormous pressure on a woman who is pregnant out of turn--and her family and her group--to terminate that pregnancy.” But she went on to say that “I am not at all convinced that there is widespread physical coercion in the Chinese program. And yet visiting Sichuan I do have to ask myself *if they have any other choice but to implement a strong program!*” (emphasis added).^[22] The IPPF and its affiliates were more direct, continuing to offer fulsome praise of China’s “successful” one-child policy and abstaining from any hint that this success was obtained under duress.^[23]

Parroting Chinese official denials, the controllers dismissed reports of forced abortions as “local aberrations” or, more commonly, refused to acknowledge them at all. Nor were they concerned that the one-child policy ran roughshod over human rights. They rarely

referred to the family-planning “high tides” that periodically gripped the country. They avoided mentioning the “mass mobilizations” in which women are rounded up against their will to have IUDs inserted, undergo abortions, or be sterilized.^[24] They turned a blind eye to the severe punishments visited upon women who, like Li Aihai, evaded the mandatory “surgeries,” and bore children without government permission.

How, after all, could they condemn China for actually *doing* what they themselves had long advocated? The Westerners had become fixated on the numbers. In 1994, Dr. Richard Cash of the Harvard School of Public Health congratulated China’s State Family Planning Commission on having had “a very strong family-planning program for many years,” and urged China to continue its “very good work” and not allow its “people to slip back into having larger families.”^[25] The numbers were the thing: As long as births in China were headed in the right direction—down--what did it matter how it was done?

The more criticism of the one-child policy grew, the more its foreign supporters rallied to its defense with a strange combination of threats and denial. Some warned darkly that other countries, if they could not get their birth rates down by voluntary means, would soon have to adopt compulsory family planning. Some singled out countries like India as places where the Chinese model should be adopted immediately. The denial strategy was exemplified by UNFPA head Nafis Sadik, who in 1989 informed a CBS reporter that “the implementation of the policy [in China] and the acceptance of the policy is *purely voluntary*. There is *no such thing* as, you know, a license to have a birth and so on” (emphasis added).^[26] It is uncertain whether Sadik actually believed this. Chinese officials are of course at pains to reassure every Western visitor that the one-child policy is “purely voluntary,” but every Chinese understands that the state has assumed regulatory power over reproduction. The state-run media regularly warn couples that they are not free to have as many children as they would like, as when the Jilin provincial newspaper in October 1993 reported that, according to the provincial birth-control regulations, married couples “cannot voluntarily have children unless they obtain a child-bearing license.”^[27]

When China passed its “New Family Planning Law” on 23 September 2002, Chinese population control officials and overseas apologists were at pains to reassure foreign critics that it was an effort to liberalize or relax the one-child policy. Nothing could have been further from the truth. John Aird, the former head of the China branch of the U.S. Census Bureau, testified before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China that the law was actually “intended to increase the government’s control over child-bearing in order to reduce the numbers of births and hold down the rate of population growth.”^[27a] The law was just another instrument to be used by the Chinese government in its relentless war on women and their children, a war that some were eager to carry overseas.

For example, in 2005 a Hong Kong pregnant mother of two visiting the Hunan Province on mainland China was recently pressured to abort her six-month-old unborn baby. According to Hong Kong’s *Apple Daily*, the mother with her two young children was visiting relatives on the mainland when family planning officials came to the home and insisted she abort her unborn child. The family planning officials went so far as to try to drag the woman to a hospital, but her relatives stopped them

and contacted Hong Kong government authorities who were able to explain the woman's citizenship and legal right to carry her pregnancy to term by Hong Kong law. They explained that, with its own separate political and economic system, Hong Kong is currently exempt from Chinese mainland one-child policy. ("HK saves mother, baby from forced abortion in China," *The Taipei Times*, 12 July 2005, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2005/07/12/2003263164>)

EXPORTING THE CHINA MODEL

In April 1991, Sadik gushed to a Chinese reporter that "China has every reason to feel proud of and pleased with its remarkable achievements made in its family-planning policy and control of its population growth over the past 10 years. Now the country could offer its experiences and special experts to help other countries."^[28] She added that "UNFPA is going to employ some of [China's family-planning experts] to work in other countries and popularize China's experiences in population-growth control and family planning."^[29] This was no idle threat: When the UNFPA served as the "technical secretary" of Peru's infamous sterilization campaign a few years later, it brought in Chinese experts to, among other things, train the surgical teams in how to tie women's tubes assembly-line style.

Most governments are either unwilling or unable to bring all the childbearing in their countries under state control. One of the few exceptions is Vietnam, whose political and economic system is almost identical to that of neighboring China. Hanoi, with UNFPA assistance, has designed and is carrying out a population-control policy that relies on targets, quotas, and coercive measures virtually identical to China's to limit every couple to two children. "Communist Party members who have more than two face automatic expulsion and parents are often asked to pay the health and education costs of a third child," reports the BBC. "More serious sanctions include having land confiscated."^[30] Serious, indeed: In a peasant society like Vietnam a family's plot of land is often all that stands between it and starvation. Another consequence of the policy is that Vietnam, like China, has "one of the world's highest rates of abortion."^[31] Even the *Population and Development Review*, as a rule no critic of family planning, reports that "women have been forced to use IUDs and have been forced to have abortions."^[32]

This familiar litany of abuses has elicited nothing but praise from the UNFPA, which remains unabashedly eager to take credit for the forced reduction in fertility. According to one U.N. document, "Although government policy bears the main responsibility for this achievement, UNFPA's assistance in preparing for and supporting the policy reform provided necessary capacity and support for implementing it."^[33] Omar Ertur, UNFPA country representative in Hanoi, praised Vietnam's National Committee for Population and Family Planning for being "very successful [in] achieving a tremendous reduction in a very short period of time."^[34] The UNFPA honored Vietnam's population controllers with its 1999 United Nations Population Award.^[35] The UNFPA has of late taken to running "model county" programs in Vietnam, a dodge that serves to insulate the organization from the charge that it is complicit in the human-rights abuses that abound in the country as a whole.^[36]

Although the Chinese model has proven difficult to export in its entirety, that hasn't deterred the UNFPA and other organizations from imposing the program piecemeal on other countries. Governments have been encouraged by these groups to adopt Chinese-style targets and quotas, bribes and punishments, organizational structures, and promotional propaganda. Where these techniques have been successfully transplanted, they have given rise to systematic coercion, even in countries generally lacking a high degree of control. All that is required for this to happen, as population expert John Aird once observed, is "a politically inert, uneducated, impoverished population and an established pattern of bureaucratic authoritarianism."^[37] Quite a few countries in the developing world fit this description.

National Targets. Since the 1970s China has set population targets.^[38] Following China's lead, the UNFPA and other agencies insist that governments, at a minimum, set 10- or 15-year targets for family size and total population. Targets for such things as "number and percentage of contraceptive acceptors" and "numbers and percentage of women sterilized" are also pushed. Governments reluctant to set targets have been told by the World Bank and USAID that they will not receive grants and loans until they do.^[39] Targets and quotas, it should be noted, were banned by the 1994 Cairo population conference on the grounds that they *always* lead to abuses; this prohibition has been largely ignored.

Bribes and Punishments for Officials. To keep its millions of population-control functionaries in line, China developed what it calls the "job responsibility system." Each year, officials at each level of government pledge in writing to their superiors that they will meet their assigned birth-control targets and quotas. Those who do so receive public commendations and cash awards, and are slotted for advancement. Those who fail are publicly reprimanded and fined, and may even be demoted. Repeated failure ends in complete disgrace: loss of Party membership and dismissal from one's post. Meeting targets is thus a career-maker--or breaker. No one should be surprised when Chinese officials pressure a pregnant woman into aborting an "over-quota" child, or lock up a mother of two until she "agrees" to sterilization. China's leaders designed the "job responsibility system" to ensure precisely this outcome.^[40]

International-aid agencies such as the World Bank and USAID often make continued assistance to developing countries contingent on their attainment of family-planning targets.^[41] National authorities, anxious over future funding prospects, then bear down on local officials, suggesting that assigned targets are to be attained by whatever means necessary. In India, this approach has led officials to compel submission to sterilization by withholding food rations, confiscating salaries, issuing strongly worded threats, and even resorting to the out-and-out use of physical force.^[42]

The Chinese practice of giving local administrators public commendations and awards for their achievements has also led to abuses in places like Bangladesh, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Even national goals that have been set (with foreign encouragement) "for planning purposes only" have encouraged compulsory measures when local officials have been judged on how well they met the targets.^[43] Regional

leaders in Indonesia may have imagined that they were only setting “planning” targets for numbers of contraceptive acceptors in their areas, but when local officials were then held responsible for maintaining them, massive abuses occurred.^[44]

Bribes and Punishments for Families. Heavy pressure is brought to bear directly on Chinese families: Those who go along with the one-child policy are promised that their children will have preferential access to inoculations, education, and employment. Those who break the rules are not only denied such benefits, but are threatened with heavy fines. According to regulations adopted in 1991 in Beijing municipality, the penalties for having a second child range from 5,000 to 50,000 *yuan*, and for having a third 20,000 to 100,000 *yuan*.^[45] Considering that the average rural family earns less than 1,000 *yuan* a year, fines of such magnitude seem spectacularly out of proportion, until one realizes that their true purpose is to *deter* couples from continuing out-of-plan pregnancies—and to make them submit to abortions. As incomes have risen, so have the fines been escalating, having been increased again as recently as 2002.^[46]

Chinese-style threats and fines have been adopted in Indonesia, where in the 1980s Balinese Hindus who refused to use birth control were threatened with expulsion from their villages.^[47] Even incentives can have the force of compulsion if they relate to vital necessities, as happened in Peru under dictator Alberto Fujimori^[48]: Poor, hungry women were told that to qualify for free food, or to receive medical care, they must submit to sterilization. Similar abuses occurred in Bangladesh in recent years, where the Chinese model has been explicitly held up for emulation.^[49]

Group Pressure Tactics. The plan, the Chinese government deliberately generates “peer pressure” against potential rule-breakers by means of group rewards and punishments. Heilongjiang province, for example, bowed to peasant desires for sons (and rising rates of female infanticide) by announcing in 1988 that it would partially relax the one-child policy in the villages--but *only* if everyone cooperated. Rural couples whose first child was a boy would still have to stop at one. Couples whose first child was a girl would get a second chance at a male heir, but on one condition: There could be absolutely no unauthorized births in their village.^[50] Neighboring Liaoning province adopted a variant of the same policy, requiring that a village have no unauthorized births and all of its married women on birth control before it could qualify for second births. If even one illegal baby was born, all second births would be forbidden that year. The policy was said to have “strengthened group awareness” among Liaoning’s peasants.^[51] No doubt it did. The head of China’s State Family Planning Council, Ms. Peng Peiyun, praised this pressure tactic as a way of “tightening up” family-planning work, and recommended that it be implemented throughout the country.^[52]

Similar tactics are used in the cities, where the one-child policy continues to be strictly enforced. Workers in a given factory or department are denied bonuses, awards, expansion plans, and other benefits if even one of their number has an unauthorized child. Women who get pregnant outside the plan are immediately ostracized by their fellow workers and put under tremendous pressure to abort.^[53] As a result, observed John Aird, in urban China compliance with the one-child rule is almost total.^[54]

These pressure tactics have been put to very effective use elsewhere. In India, for example, some villages have been denied access to irrigation water at subsidized prices until they came up with the required number of sterilizations.^[55] A new village well was promised to another village if “100 percent of eligible couples” would undergo sterilization; after the last vasectomy was performed, the well was dug.^[56] Cash payments have been offered to all families in a village if 75 percent of the men submit to vasectomy.^[57]

Long-Term Contraception/Sterilization. From the beginning of the one-child policy, Chinese authorities have followed an inflexible rule: Sterilize or implant an IUD in a woman after the birth of her first child; sterilize her after the birth of her second. The advantage of this method for China’s family-planning officials is obvious: They no longer have to maintain constant surveillance over all women of childbearing age to make sure that they are not starting or concealing an unauthorized pregnancy. The government-run clinics will remove an IUD on request only if it is causing severe side-effects, and then only if the woman agrees to use another birth-control method, preferably a long-term implant like Norplant or an injectable like Depo-Provera. For a woman to remove her own IUD is defined as a criminal act. Those who wish to do so nonetheless must rely on illegal operations that often involve dangerous methods and unsanitary conditions--back-alley IUD removals, one might call them.

This component of the Chinese program has proven so successful in China that it is becoming a standard feature of family-planning programs worldwide. This shift from

contraceptives, such as birth-control pills and condoms, that are controlled by the user, to more permanent measures—IUDs, sterilization, and long-term implants and injectables—more easily imposed on the user, has been underway for two decades now. The result has been a marked decrease in the freedom of women and couples in the developing world to decide for themselves the number and spacing of their children.

Women pressured into adopting such measures may change their minds later, but there is often little they can do about it, especially if the clinics refuse to reverse the sterilization or remove the IUD, or charge exorbitant fees for doing so. In Bangladesh and Haiti women suffering from acute side-effects from Norplant implants they had accepted as part of an “experimental” program were reportedly told the device could not be removed.^[58] Too poor to seek alternative medical care, they had no choice but to endure their debilitating chemical sterilization until the five-year implant had run its course.

Propaganda. China’s state-controlled media have bombarded the Chinese for a quarter-century with anti-population propaganda, to the point where many otherwise educated Chinese believe the Party when it claims that China’s principal problem is too many people (rather than, say, absence of democratic rule, massive official corruption, and so on). Dissenting voices are not tolerated. In January 1994 two Chinese newspapers were reportedly punished for printing articles favoring second births and “opposing family planning.”^[59]

The Chinese are constantly told that the country’s demographic situation is “grim,” that economic progress is imperiled, and that even the food supply is in grave danger because of excessive population growth.^[60] The government propaganda machine doesn’t just focus on the long term; it insists that even failing to meet *current* targets will mean social and economic ruin. This propaganda helps to justify coercion, by convincing the Chinese people that procreating couples are a threat to the nation.

But one-sided propaganda does not require a controlled press: In much of the world, all it requires is money. Even in democratic countries, including the U.S., media discussion of population problems is dominated by the deep pockets of the anti-population movement. Literally tens of millions of dollars are spent each year to convince the world’s press—and through them the world’s people—of the gravity of the “population crisis.” The UNFPA alone devotes approximately \$25 million, or 10 percent of its quarter-billion-dollar budget, to conjuring up specters of catastrophe.

THE UNFPA AND TODAY’S CHINA

The population controllers’ symbiotic relationship with Chinese-style family planning continues. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, executive director of the UNFPA, told a PRC journalist in January 2002 that “China, having adopted practical measures in accordance with her current situation, has scored remarkable achievements in population control. In recent years, the UNFPA and China have carried out a series of favorable and positive cooperation with more than 100 cooperative items of assistance established in the country.”^[61]

The most curious development occurred in 1998, when the UNFPA announced that it had been invited by the Chinese government to set up “model family-planning programs” in 32 of China’s counties, or county-level municipalities. Nafis Sadik, then-director of UNFPA, let it be known that the Chinese government had agreed to suspend the one-child policy during the next four years. In her words, “In the project counties couples will be allowed to have as many children as they want, whenever they want, without requiring birth permits or being subject to quotas.”⁶² In a subsequent letter to the U.S. Congress, Sadik was even more specific. Within the UNFPA’s 32 model counties, she said, “(1) reproductive health programs are fully voluntary; (2) women are free to voluntarily select the timing and spacing of their pregnancies; (3) targets and quotas have been lifted; (4) abortion is not promoted as a method of family planning; (5) coercion does not exist.”

Although Sadik’s claim to have set up a “no-coercion zone” in China was later to be proved false by investigators from the Population Research Institute or PRI (an organization of which I am president), it was by itself a remarkable, if backhanded, admission of the real state of affairs in China. For up to that point it had been the steadfast position of the Chinese government—maintained also by the UNFPA—that the one-child policy neither relied upon birth quotas and targets, nor required parents to obtain a birth permit before having a child. Anyway, why would the Chinese government abandon controls that had successfully driven down the birth rate for two decades?

The UNFPA sought to explain: “The Government of China is keen to move away from its *administrative approach* to family planning to an integrated, client-centered reproductive health approach” (italics added).⁶³ But the Chinese government did not need to be convinced, by the UNFPA or anyone else, of the value of replacing direct coercion with the more subtle forms of threats, bribes, and propaganda that population controllers commonly employ to stop Third World families from having children. Senior Chinese family-planning officials have always urged their juniors to employ such techniques to meet their quotas, reserving forced abortions and forced sterilizations for the truly recalcitrant.

We at the PRI suspected that UNFPA’s claims to have de-fanged China’s family-planning program were exaggerated. So, in September 2001, we organized a team of investigators, led by paralegal Josephine Guy, to go undercover into an UNFPA “model county.” After four days in Sihui county, Guangdong province, Ms. Guy reported back that people had flocked to tell her about the abuse that they and their families had suffered as a result of still-coercive family-planning policies. As she was later to testify before the International Relations Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives:

We were told of efforts by many women to hide their pregnancies from government officials, in an attempt to escape forced abortion, so they could give birth to a child they desired. We were told of women having to hide their children, to escape retribution from officials for not having an abortion. We were told of the many so-called “black” children in the region who are born out of accord with

local birth regulations. We were told of the punishments inflicted on those who wish to freely determine for themselves the timing and spacing of pregnancy.

We were told of the non-voluntary use of IUDs and mandatory examinations so that officials can ensure that women have not removed IUDs in violation of policy, and the strict punishments which result from non-compliance with this coercive and inhumane policy. . . . The interviews we conducted were recorded in notebooks, on audio and videotape, and additional photographic evidence was obtained. The abuses we documented during this investigation are recent, ongoing, rampant, and unrelenting. And they exist in a county where the United Nations Population Fund claims that women are free to determine the timing and spacing of pregnancy.

At a location not far from [the UNFPA office], a woman testified that she became pregnant despite an earlier attempt by family-planning officials to forcibly sterilize her. That attempt failed. She became pregnant, and was forcibly sterilized a second time by family-planning doctors and officials. Had she refused, she told us on videotape, family-planning crews would have torn her house down.^[64]

Everyone Josephine Guy spoke with had a story to tell—a sister who had been sterilized, a friend who had undergone a coerced abortion. There is no voluntarism in Sihui, she concluded, despite UNFPA claims to the contrary.

On her last day in Sihui, Ms. Guy and her team set out to locate the office from which the UNFPA directs its “model family-planning program.” To her surprise, she was directed to the Sihui county family-planning office, where she found the single UNFPA representative sitting in the midst of government family planners. The significance of this arrangement was immediately apparent: The Chinese government and the UNFPA were working hand-in-glove to enforce the one-child policy. As one family-planning victim told Ms. Guy, “Family-planning policies involving coercion and force are stricter today than ever before.”^[65]

The PRI’s investigation prompted the Bush administration to undertake one of its own, sending a three-member assessment team to China in May 2002. The official nature of the visit constituted a tremendous handicap for the team: It ensured that the Chinese state was able to monitor their comings and goings and to prevent them from coming into direct contact with cases of coercion. Nonetheless, the team found that UNFPA was supplying computers and medical equipment to family-planning agencies engaged in coercive practices.^[66] On July 21, 2002, Secretary of State Colin Powell announced a new policy: “UNFPA’s support of, and involvement in, China’s population-planning activities allows the Chinese government to implement more effectively its program of coercive abortion. Therefore, it is not permissible to continue funding UNFPA at this time.”^[67] The \$34 million appropriated by Congress for FY 2002, he continued, will go instead to Child Survival and Health programs.

Powell called on the UNFPA to stop “support[ing] a program of coercive abortion,” but the agency appears ready to persevere: It reacted to the cutoff of U.S. funding by *expanding* its program in China from 32 to 42 counties. The new, multi-million dollar agreement with China will carry through 2007.

The decision of the Bush Administration to deny funding to the UNFPA has been reaffirmed in the years since, even as the population control movement continues its efforts in Congress to overturn the President’s decision. In 2005 Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) once again introduced an amendment in the House of Representatives that would have restored the \$34 million in UNFPA funding, only to have it go down to defeat on a 233 to 192 vote.[67a] This was a much larger margin than the tiny three- to five-vote victories of recent years, suggesting that even a few nominally pro-choice members of the Congress are coming around to the view that Chinese women should have the right to choose to bear children.

MORE MONEY FOR CHINA APPROVED BY UNFPA

On January 30, 2006, the New York-based Executive Board of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) approved, as UNFPA itself put it, “the sixth UNFPA programme of assistance to China, totaling \$27 million over five years. As they did so, board members and other United Nations countries praised UNFPA as a ‘force for good’ that promotes and protects human rights, implicitly repudiating a claim that the Fund abets coercive practices.” That last clause refers to the Bush Administration, which has withheld American money from UNFPA because of its assistance to the Chinese population control effort. In China, women and their husbands are severely penalized for having more than their quota of one or two children. UNFPA officials do not directly engage in the forced abortion and sterilization practices of the Chinese regime, but subsidize them with its financial and technical assistance to Chinese population control bureaucrats.

Ten European countries led by Britain issued a strong statement of support for UNFPA. These nations provide most of UNFPA funding. Britain, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Switzerland and Germany signed the joint statement. UNFPA has long claimed that coercive practices have lessened in the areas of China where it operates, but a September 2001 PRI investigation found that forcible coercion continues in the same counties in which UNFPA works.

UNFPA STOPS COERCION?

How hard UNFPA tries to end coercion is questionable. UNFPA money flows to China without any public strings attached. Even a Dec. 15, 2005 article by UNFPA itself raises questions about what coercive practices UNFPA opposes in any case.

“Lifting birth-spacing rules is an important step towards a fully voluntary approach to pregnancy decisions,” said UNFPA Representative Siri Tellier in the article, which praised an end to birth-spacing regulations in Hainan Province and the subgroup of penalties that went with them. “Around 40% of penalties involve cases of birth spacing, so eliminating that requirement is significant. However, it goes only part way to meeting international human rights standards. We would like China to eliminate any economic penalties for out-of-plan births.” The article discussed the difficulties poor families faced in paying the astronomical fines levied on them for violation of their birth mandates.

It seems curious that he would say “economic penalties” instead of “all penalties” or something to that effect. Third World governments practice various kinds of coercion, from fines to denial of education

benefits to ineligibility for government jobs to loss of employment altogether, to keep couples from having as many children as they would like. China employs all of these methods plus simply rounding women up by the thousands and forcibly sterilizing them, which is not an economic penalty (for examples, see *Time* magazine, “Enemies of the State?,” Sep. 19, 2005).

Hu Daji, Deputy Director of the Hainan Population and Family Planning Bureau, told UNFPA that guaranteeing women’s rights was a goal, but it has to be pursued alongside another one. “Our challenge is to not have more births and to protect clients’ rights,” he said. The order of his priorities is revealing: Control comes first.

BAD IDEAS IN THE WEST; LIFE AND DEATH IN CHINA

Population control was not imposed on China by the West, as it was imposed on smaller, weaker countries--but that doesn’t absolve the West of all responsibility for the one-child policy and its attendant abuses. Not only did Western-funded organizations like the UNFPA lend China their enthusiastic support but, as recent research by Susan Greenhalgh and others makes clear, the intellectual impetus for the policy came from the West.^[68] Vaporous Sixties ideas about population growth and resource depletion had explosive real-world consequences, a decade later and half a world away. The core ideas underlying the one-child policy, it turns out, came from Western “science,” more precisely from the notorious 1974 Club of Rome study that claimed we were breeding ourselves to extinction.

The *Limits to Growth* computer simulation, carried out by a group of MIT-based systems engineers, predicted that the world would come to an end by about 2070 if population growth continued.^[69] The authors saw “no other avenue to survival” than population control, which was “the only feasible solution.”^[70] The book’s conclusions lent themselves to hype, which, it turned out, was precisely what the Club of Rome wanted. A public-relations firm was hired, a press conference was organized, and the book was released with great fanfare. Scary stories sell, and this one sold a frightening 4 million copies, injecting the book indelibly into the world’s consciousness.

The stage was now set for Song Jian, a systems-control specialist for China’s state-owned defense industry, to visit Europe in 1978. He might as well have come from another planet. Like other Chinese intellectuals, he had been isolated from the outside world for decades, and was desperately eager to catch up on developments. During his trip, as he later wrote, he “happened to learn about the application of systems-analysis theory by European scientists to the study of population problems with a great success. For instance, in a ‘Blueprint for Survival’ published in 1972, British scientists contended that Britain’s population of 56 million had greatly exceed[ed] the sustaining capacity of [the] ecosystem of the Kingdom. They argued Britain’s population should be gradually reduced to 30 million, namely, a reduction by nearly 50 percent . . . I was extremely excited about these documents and determined to try the method of demography.”^[71] He had been to the future, or so he thought. In his baggage when he returned to China was a copy of *The Limits to Growth*.

Although Song Jian had no way of knowing it, what he thought was cutting-edge systems analysis was little more than a scientific hoax. The data were incomplete and sometimes inaccurate, its methodology was flawed, and it assumed—wrongly--that scientific and technical advances would cease.^[72] In the words of legendary demographer Julian Simon, “*The Limits to Growth* has been blasted as foolishness or fraud by almost every economist who has read it closely or reviewed it in print.”^[73] The most decisive refutation of the study came from the Club of Rome itself, which--two years after its publication--suddenly “reversed its position” and “came out for more growth.”^[74]

But the damage was done. In Song Jian, they had captured their most important convert ever: Through him, their little caper had an impact on the lives of over a billion people--and continues to do so down today. Borrowing the strident rhetoric of the Club of Rome report, Song Jian popularized the notion of a world in crisis: “Facing the rapid increase in population, countries everywhere are watching developments with grave concern.”^[75] And he drew the same conclusion: “The capacity of the land . . . does not permit excessive increases in population. This is quite obvious.”^[76] He reinforced his rhetoric with eye-catching charts showing China’s population remaining low for 4,000 years, then exploding to a terrifying 1 billion by 1980.^[77] No mention was made of recent, dramatic declines in the birth rate.^[78]

Other experts jumped into the debate, arguing that China’s economy was collapsing under the weight of its population. Population growth was said to be responsible for every conceivable economic ill, from rising levels of unemployment and poverty to falling levels of labor productivity and investment. China, it seemed, faced a population crisis of enormous proportions which, if left unchecked, would shatter any hope of ever joining the ranks of the developed nations. Nothing less was at stake than the country’s drive for wealth and global power, warned Vice Premier Chen Muhua in the pages of the *People’s Daily*: “In order to realize the Four Modernizations, we must control population growth in a planned way.”^[79]

The Chinese leadership was ripe for a radical solution; after all, the nation’s future was at stake. And Song Jian, armed with a computer simulation right out of the pages of *The Limits to Growth*, offered one.

After returning from Europe, Song set out to replicate the systems-analysis studies he had stumbled across in Europe, this time with China as the subject. He formed a research group: himself, two other systems-control specialists, and an economist. Using newly available computer technology, the group first set out to calculate China’s “optimal” population in the year 2080. Making the same kinds of highly questionable assumptions as their Club of Rome mentors, using data that were even more fragmentary, they calculated that the optimal population in 2080 would be between 650 and 700 million people. This figure, which was roughly two-thirds of China’s 1980 population, they proposed as the goal of any birth-control program.^[80] China’s “only choice” was to reduce the population down to this level, Song maintained, borrowing the *Limits* language. There was simply “no other way,” “no other choice.”^[81]

In order to determine the level of fertility control necessary to reach this goal, the group next projected future population growth under different childbearing schemes: 3.0, 2.3, 2.0, 1.5, 1.0. The first three they rejected out of hand. If the people were allowed to continue to bear children at the 1978 rate—2.3—they calculated that the population would grow to 2.12 billion in 2080. Even if the rate were forced down to 2.0, there would still be 1.47 billion Chinese alive after a century. These schemes “obviously cannot be adopted,” they said. The seriousness of the population crisis required sterner measures. Limiting women to an average of 1.5 children produced the kind of population reduction they were looking for. Under this scenario, the number of Chinese would decline to 777 million by 2080, within striking distance of their “optimum population” of 650-700 million. Under their final scenario, in which every couple would be limited to one child by 1985, the population would plummet to only 370 million, well below the optimum.^[82]

The Song group was well-connected, and soon after completing their computer simulations they were able to present them to top Communist Party and government leaders. These were reportedly “very impressed with the science and the numbers.”^[83] As well they might be: The presentation by the Song group confirmed one of their most cherished beliefs, namely, that Western science and technology, appropriately applied to the Chinese context, would be the salvation of their nation. As Greenhalgh writes, “The attitude towards everything foreign was close to idolatry. This was to have fateful consequences, as Western ‘science’—at least one odd brand of it—became the core of Chinese policy.”^[84]

The computer simulation presented by the Song group—perhaps the first that senior leaders had ever seen—must have been greeted with not only awe but relief. Here was welcome confirmation that “overpopulation,” rather than, say, economic mismanagement or political turmoil, was the true source of China’s backwardness. And not only had the Song group used Western “science” to identify the problem, it had used those same techniques to devise a plan to save China. Scientific and technological modernization, named by Paramount Leader Deng Xiaoping the most important of his Four Modernizations, was paying off. How proud they must have been that their own experts, using the latest in Western “science,” had so precisely calculated China’s “optimum population.” That Song’s group was even able to offer precise advice on fertility levels and future population numbers was an added bonus. The leadership had few qualms about regulating the fertility of its subjects—it had done worse over the previous three decades—but Song’s insistence that Western “science” left them “no other choice” made the decision easy.

The only question was whether to adopt the 1.5-child-per-family policy preferred by the Song group, or to impose an even more restrictive one-child-per-family policy. The leadership in the end rejected the 1.5-children option, apparently fearing that the peasants would then push for two or more.^[85] When Song’s study was published in the official Party organ, the *People’s Daily*, on March 7, 1980, it was edited to read that the 1.5-child-per-family policy would be “disadvantageous to our country’s four modernizations . . . and to the raising of the people’s standard of living.” The one-child-per-couple policy, which results in a population much smaller than the supposed optimum, was

described as “a comparatively ideal scheme for solving our country’s population problem.”^[86]

Publication in the *People’s Daily* meant that the policy had received the imprimatur of the Communist Party and was therefore beyond further discussion and debate. Six months later, in mid-September 1980, the one-child policy was formally ratified by the third session of the Fifth National People’s Congress. From then on it was set in stone. On this terrible altar millions of mothers and children have suffered and died, sacrificed for a scientific fraud.

* * *

As the case of China puts in stark relief, the real danger to the people of the developing world is not “overpopulation” at all, but rather alarmist notions of overpopulation. The notion that people are somehow social, ecological, and economic nuisances is a pernicious one, predisposing governments to treat their own citizens as a form of pestilence. Instead of trying to lift their poor out of poverty, governments instead try to reduce their numbers. Authentic economic development is neglected, human-rights abuses abound, and everyone’s freedoms are put at risk. Population control encourages domestic tyranny of a very personal and deadly sort, as the case of China makes painfully clear.

NOTES

1. Josephine Guy, “Story of a Beautiful Baby Boy,” *PRI Review* 11:4 (Sept.-Oct. 2001), pp. 8-9.
2. Quoted in Josephine Guy, “Women and Child Abuse in China,” *PRI Review* 11:4 (Sept.-Oct. 2001), p. 3.
3. The quote comes from Vice Premier Chen Muhua, who said in 1979 that “Socialism should make it possible to regulate the reproduction of human beings so that population growth keeps in step with the growth of material production.” Quoted in my *Broken Earth: The Rural Chinese* (New York: Free Press, 1983), p. 246.
4. I have made periodic trips into China to assess family-planning policies, have commissioned others to undertake such investigations, and have closely followed both official Chinese pronouncements and reports appearing in the specialized literature and the population press.
5. See the testimony of Gao Xiaoduan, who, as a senior population-control official in Fujian province, had systematically committed these and other abuses of human rights with the encouragement and support of her superiors. Following her escape from China, Mrs. Gao was invited by Rep. Christopher Smith (R-N.J.) to testify before the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights of the International Relations Committee. Gao Xiaoduan, “Forced Abortion and Sterilization in China: The View from the Inside,” Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, June 10, 1998. Also see my book, *A Mother’s Ordeal: One Woman’s Fight Against China’s One-Child Policy* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993), for similar abuses.

6. John Aird, *Slaughter of the Innocents: Coercive Birth Control in China* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute Press, 1990), p. 92.
7. Harold R. Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day, 1958), pp. 63-64. Also quoted in my *China Misperceived: American Illusions and Chinese Reality* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), pp. 18-19.
8. If the column was advancing at the rate of 2 miles per hour, and each five abreast were separated by 4, then 13,200 marchers would pass under the arch in one hour. Given that the Chinese population is roughly 100,000 times this number, it would take 100,000 hours, or roughly 10 years, for all of the Chinese to march under the arch. An additional year or so would be required for the 100,000,000 million or so babies born during this decade to themselves clear the arch, for a total of 11 years.
9. The remark is quoted in Nicholas Eberstadt, "UNFPA: A Runaway Agency," *PRI Review* 12:3 (May-June 2002), p. 8.
10. International Planned Parenthood Federation, *IPPF in Action* (London: Typographic Press, 1982), p. 20. Quoted in Jacqueline Kasun, *The War Against Population: The Ideology and Economics of World Population Control* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, Revised Edition, 1999), p. 122.
11. Bryan T. Johnson, "The World Bank and Economic Growth: 50 Years of Failure" (Washington, D.C: The Heritage Foundation, May 16, 1996), based on World Bank figures. Quoted in Kasun, *War*, p. 122.
12. Kasun, *War*, p. 122.
13. "Guojia jihua shengyu lianhehui Wu Kunhuang he Aluweihai'er zhuren shuo: renmin xuanze Zhongguo de jihua shengyu shi renmin zijide xuanze" ("President Ng Khoon-Fong and Director Aluvihare of the International Planned Parenthood Federation say that China's family planning program is the people's own choice"), *Jiankang bao (Health Gazette)*, Beijing, Apr. 18, 1983, p. 1; and "Family planning measures hopeful," *China Daily*, Beijing, May 4, 1983, p. 3. Cited in John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-August 1994), p. 1.
14. Kasun, *War*, p. 122.
15. "China Daily wins global media award," *China Daily*, Beijing, Mar. 16, 1982, p. 3. Cited in John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 1.
16. The World Bank, *World Development Report 1984*, p. 160. Quoted in Kasun, *War*, p. 124.
17. Michele Vink, "Abortion and Birth Control in Canton, China," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 30, 1981.
18. Christopher Wren, "Chinese Region Showing Resistance to National Goals for Birth Control," *New York Times*, May 16, 1982.
19. See my "Why are Baby Girls Being Killed in China?" *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 30, 1981.
20. See, inter alia, my *Broken Earth*, esp. Chapter 8; Michael Weiskopf, "Abortion Tears Fabric of Chinese Society," *Washington Post*, January 7, 1985.
21. Burleson, who headed the Population Council from 1960 to 1974, thought the population crisis so severe that "forced-pace measures" were necessary. In his article "Beyond Family Planning," he proposed that massive government intervention was the only answer. See *PRI Review* 4:5 (Sept.-Oct., 1994), p. 11.

22. Sharon Camp, on the Diane Rehm Show, WAMU, Dec. 13, 1991. See also "Population Crisis Committee OK's Coercion," *PRI Review* 2(2):10 (Mar.-Apr. 1992).
23. The IPPF affiliate is the Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP), which publishes *JOICFP News*, Aug. 2000, Sept. 2000.
24. John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 1.
25. See "A Peoples' Project in China," *JOICFP News*, no. 234, Dec. 1994, p. 6, as quoted in the *PRI Review* 4:2 (Mar.-Apr. 1994), p. 7.
26. Quoted in Christopher Smith, "Judging a Civilization," *PRI Review* 11:4 (Sept.-Oct. 2001), p. 8.
27. "Several regulations of Jilin province for the administration and management of family planning," *Jilin Ribao*, Changchun, Oct. 29, 1993, Joint Publications Research Service, no. 94010, Feb. 10, 1994, pp. 19-20. Cited in John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 3.
- 27a. See Steven W. Mosher, "John Aird, China Demographer and Critic, R.I.P.," *PRI Review* 15(5): 3-4.
28. XINHUA-English, Beijing, Apr. 11, 1991, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *Daily Report: China*, no. 91-071, April 12, 1991, pp. 8-9; see also John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 1.
29. Although Sadik did not know it at the time, the same month that she endorsed the Chinese model, Party leaders had ordered a new crackdown on out-of-plan births. Family-planning officials throughout the country resorted to more direct forms of coercion, and the Chinese birth rate plummeted to unprecedentedly low levels. News of the crackdown finally broke in April 1993, embarrassing the UNFPA and other foreign supporters of China's "voluntary" program. Sadik, eager for the U.S. to resume funding her organization, aired the possibility of withdrawing from China. When the newly installed Clinton administration proved willing to resume U.S. funding of the UNFPA in spite of its involvement in China's coercive program, all talk of withdrawal was dropped. See Nicholas D. Kristof, "A U.N. agency may leave China over coercive birth control," *New York Times*, May 15, 1993, p. 1.
30. Owen Bennett-Jones, "Vietnam's Two-Child Policy," BBC, 8 November 2000.
31. "Vietnam Plans Law to Ban Tests on Sex of Fetus," Reuters, 16 November 2001.
32. Daniel Goodkind, "Vietnam's New Fertility Policy," *Population and Development Review* 15(1), March 1989.
33. "Capacity Building for Eradicating Poverty, an Impact Evaluation of U.N. System Activities in Vietnam 1985-1997." U.N. Fund for Population Activities. Cited in Douglas A. Sylva, "The UNFPA: Assault on the World's Peoples," (New York: Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, 2002), p. 51.
34. Owen Bennett-Jones, "Vietnam's Two-Child Policy," BBC, 8 November 2000.
35. Douglas A. Sylva, "The UNFPA: Assault on the World's Peoples," (New York: Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, 2002), p. 51.
36. See Weekly Briefing on UNFPA's "model county" program in Vietnam.
37. John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 2.
38. Ibid.
39. Also see Betsy Hartmann, "Population Control as Foreign Policy," *Covert Action* 39 (Winter 1991-92), p. 28.

40. For example, according to Article 4 of the *Tianjin Municipality Regulations of Planned Birth*, which were promulgated on April 15, 1994, this major city in North China holds the heads of work units "duty-bound, authorized, and accountable" for meeting birth quotas set by their superiors. Xinnanliuxing Village of Dongpuhua Township in Wuqing County, Tianjin, which has a population of 500, is allowed a quota of 5 children every two years. As human-rights activist Harry Wu comments, "If [officials] fail to [meet their quotas], they will lose their promotions and risk dismissal or punishment. This is the principal reason why Communist cadres at all levels resort to desperate, barbaric practices of forcing abortion and sterilization, and killing infants. Such a practice relates directly to the security of their jobs." See Harry Wu, "China's population policy," *PRI Review* 11:4 (Sept.-Oct. 2001), p. 7.
41. Also see Betsy Hartmann, "Population Control as Foreign Policy," *Covert Action* 39 (Winter 1991-92), p. 28.
- 42.¹John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 2.
43. Donald P. Warwick, *Bitter Pills: Population Policies and Their Implementation in Eight Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 203-204; Margot Cohen, "Success brings new problems," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Hong Kong, April 18, 1991, pp. 48-49; Wardah Hafidz, Adrina Taslim, and Sita Aripurnami, "Family planning in Indonesia: the case for policy reorientation," *Inside Indonesia*, Mar. 1992, pp. 19-22; and Judith Banister, "Vietnam's evolving population policies," *International Conference on Population, New Delhi, September 1989* (Liege: International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 1989) pp. 156-60.
44. See Betsy Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs* (Boston: South End Press, 1995), esp. pp. 73-83.
45. Cited in Tao-tai Hsia and Constance A. Johnson, "Recent legal developments in China's planned births campaign" (unpublished memorandum), July 9, 1991, p. 2. Beijing municipality includes extensive rural areas and populations. Quoted in John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 3.
46. Damion McElroy, "China's One-Child Policy Fines Rise," *London Telegraph*, July 27, 2002.
47. Donald P. Warwick, "The Ethics of Population Control," in Godfrey Roberts (ed.), *Population Policy: Contemporary Issues* (New York: Praeger, 1990), p. 26.
48. See David Morrison, "Cutting the Poor: Peruvian Sterilization Program Targets Society's Weakest," *PRI Review* 7(2): 1, 4-7
49. In December 1991 the president of Bangladesh, welcoming a family-planning delegation from China headed by Peng Peiyun, the Minister of China's State Family Planning Commission, praised China's success in population control and expressed the hope that Bangladesh and China could learn from each other's experiences. XINHUA-English, Beijing, Dec. 9, 1991, FBIS, no. 910237, Dec. 10, 1991, p. 20.
50. Harbin Radio, Heilongjiang Provincial Service, Apr. 20, 1988, FBIS, No. 88-82, Apr. 28, 1988; Meng Fang and Chen Fenglan, "Heilongjiang sheng kaizhan cang wu jihua wai shengyu cun houdong qude chengxiao" (Heilongjiang Province carries out activities to create villages with no unplanned births and obtains results), *Zhongguo renkou bao* (China Population)(ZGRKB), Beijing, 7 October 1988, p. 2. Quoted in John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 13, fn 25.

51. Yin Su and Li Zheng, "Liaoning Kaizhan cangjian 'Jihua shengyu hege cun' quanmian quanche jihua shengyu xianxing zhengce" ("Liaoning carries out activities for establishing 'qualified family planning villages' and implements the current family-planning policy fully"), ZGRKB, Sept. 30, 1988, p. 1. Quoted in John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 3.
52. Peng Peiyun, "Guanyu 1989-nian de gongzuo" ("On the work in 1989"), ZGRKB, Feb. 24, 1989, p. 1. Quoted in John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 3.
53. See, for example, the description of the policy in a letter from a Chinese factory manager to a Chinese employee studying in the U.S. who had an unauthorized pregnancy, quoted in my article, "The long arm of 'one-child' China," *Washington Post*, Apr. 10, 1998, p. B4. See also my *A Mother's Ordeal*.
54. John Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 3.
55. Donald P. Warwick, *Bitter Pills: Population Policies and Their Implementation in Eight Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 197-98.
56. Robert M. Veatch, "Governmental Population Incentives: Ethical Issues at Stake," *Studies in Family Planning* 8:4 (Apr. 1977), pp. 100-108, quoted in Kasun, *War*, p. 111.
57. Ibid.
58. UBINIG, "'The price of Norplant is TK.2000! You cannot remove it,'" *Issues in Reproductive and Genetic Engineering* 4:1 (1991), p. 46. Cited in Aird, "The China Model," *PRI Review* 4:4 (July-Aug. 1994), p. 4.
59. "Propaganda department tightens control on press," *Ming bao*, Hong Kong, 15 January 1994, FBIS, no. 94-011, Jan. 18, 1994, p. 17.
60. These arguments are still being advanced despite the continuing fast growth of the Chinese economy. China's grain production is reported to have increased by 50 percent between 1979 and 1993, while the population grew by less than 22 percent. The grain figures are given in XINHUA-English, Beijing, Sept. 16, 1993, FBIS, no. 94-027, p. 37.
61. *People's Daily*, Mar. 2001, quoted in Christopher Smith, "Judging a Civilization," *PRI Review* 11:4 (Sept.-Oct. 2001), p. 8.
62. Letter from Nafis Sadik to Bill Richardson dated Jan. 7, 1998, and quoted in "Aiding a Holocaust: New UNFPA Program Designed to Tidy Up One-Child Horror," *PRI Review* 7:2 (Mar.-Apr. 1998), p. 14. The UNFPA's Founding Charter says that "couples have the rights to decide the number and spacing of their children." Given that China has from the inception of the one-child policy denied that right, the only honorable course of action for the UNFPA is to withdraw from China—but that it refuses to do.
63. Kirsten Trone, the UNFPA program director for China, quoted in "Aiding a Holocaust: New UNFPA Program Designed to Tidy Up One-Child Horror," *PRI Review* 7:2 (Mar.-Apr. 1998), p. 14.
64. Josephine Guy, "Women and Child Abuse in China," Testimony before the Committee on International Relations of the U.S. House of Representatives, Oct. 17, 2001. See also *PRI Review* 11:4 (Sept.-Oct. 2001), p. 3.
65. Ibid.
66. "Analysis of Determination that Kemp-Kasten Amendment Precludes Further Funding to UNFPA under Pub. Law 107-115," attachment to letter from Secretary Colin Powell to Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate, July 21, 2002.

67. Letter from Secretary Colin Powell to Sen. Leahy, July 21, 2002.
- 67a. Joseph A. D'Agostino, "Human Rights Triumphs Over UNFPA Population Controllers: Margin of Victory Grows to Solid 41 in U.S. House," *Global Family Life News* 4:3(June-July 2005): 1, 6-7.
68. H. Yuan Tien, "Demography in China: From Zero to Now," *Population Index* 47(4):683-710; Tien, *China's Strategic Demographic Initiative* (New York: Praeger, 1991); Susan Greenhalgh, "Science, Modernity, and the Making of China's One-Child Policy," *Population and Development Review*, Aug. 2003.
69. D. H. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind* (New York: Universe, 1972).
70. Meadows et al., *Mankind at the Turning Point: The Second Report to the Club of Rome* (New York: Dutton, 1974), p. 196. "The Only Feasible Solution" is the title of Chapter 9, by Mihajlo Mesarovic and Eduard Pestel, of this second volume.
71. Song Jian, "Systems Science and China's Economic Reforms," in Yang Jiachi, ed., *Control Science and Technology for Development* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1986), pp. 1-8. In this section I draw upon Susan Greenhalgh's "Science, Modernity, and the Making of China's One-Child Policy," *Population and Development Review* 29(2): 163-196.
72. As a demonstration of the significance of these errors, the same rules were used to make predictions for the period from 1870 to 1970, from the basis of what was known in 1870; the computer predicted that the world would come to an end before 1970, in part because of the inability to control the massive amounts of horse manure. This can stand as an apt commentary on the whole enterprise. See Robert Sassone, *Handbook on Population* (fifth ed.; Stafford, Va.: ALL, 1994), p. 6.
73. Julian Simon, *The Ultimate Resource* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 286. See also H. S. D. Cole, Christopher Freeman, Marie Jahoda, and K. L. R. Pavitt, eds., *Models of Doom: A Critique of The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe, 1973).
74. *Time*, Apr. 26, 1976, p. 56; *New York Times*, Apr. 14, 1976.
75. Song Jian, "Population Development—Goals and Plans," in Liu Zhen et al., eds., *China's Population: Problems and Prospects* (Beijing: New World Press, 1981), pp. 25-31. Note that this English-language publication came out several years after Song had begun circulating these same ideas inside China.
76. Song, 1981, p. 26; also cited in Greenhalgh.
77. Song et al., 1985; also cited in Greenhalgh.
78. Chinese figures of the time showed that the years 1971-79 saw the natural increase rate fall by half, and the crude birth rate decline by almost as much. H. Yuan Tien, "Demography in China: From Zero to Now," *Population Index* 47(4): 683 (1981).
79. Chun Muhua, "In Order to Realize the Four Modernizations, We Must Control Population Growth in a Planned Way," *People's Daily*, Aug. 11, 1979, p. 2. The "Four Modernizations" represented Deng Xiaoping's plan to modernize China's science and technology, military, industry, and agriculture by century's end.
80. Song, 1981: 28-30.
81. *Ibid.*: 31.
82. Song Jian, Tain Xueyuan, Li Guangyuan, and Yu Jingyuan, "Concerning the Issue of Our Country's Objective in Population Development," *People's Daily*, Mar. 7, 1980, p. 5.
83. Greenhalgh, op. cit.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

86. Song Jian et al., in *People's Daily*, Mar. 7, p. 5.